[NUTRITION SPECIAL]

Pasta Perfect

Like many runners, **Joe Bastianich** thought he couldn't eat carbs and lose weight. But then the restaurateur and marathoner went back to his family's classic pasta dishes—and got fitter, faster, and leaner. Here, he shares how he did it, and how you can, too

By Peter Jaret

Photographs By **Michael Lavine** and **Antonis Achilleos**

Perfect Pasta

by Joe Bastianich

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Pomodoro Sauce-based Pasta Recipes from Runner's World

Pomodoro Sauce

Pomodoro (or tomato) sauce is the base for all of

Chef Joe Bastianich's pasta dishes featured in these pages. Use a full batch of pomodoro for each recipe.

1/4 cup olive oil
3 garlic cloves, crushed
3 16-ounce cans of peeled, whole Italian plum tomatoes, such as San Marzano
1 teaspoon Sicilian oregano (optional)
1 teaspoon salt (or to taste) Today's food marathon begins with what
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Heat oil in a saucepan over medium. Add garlic and saute until golden brown, about three minutes. While garlic browns, pour tomatoes into a bowl. Squeeze with your hands to break them up. Add tomatoes and their juice to the saucepan. Add oregano (if using), salt, and pepper. Simmer on low for 45 minutes. Add a little water if needed to keep sauce from becoming too thick (it should be bright red; if it turns brick red, it's too thick). To make oreganata, simmer sauce with sprigs of fresh oregano. Make arrabiata by adding red pepper flakes to taste. Makes six one-cup servings.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 139
CARBS: 9 G
PROTEIN: 2 G
FAT: 9 G

Pasta Pomodoro

Simmer pomodoro sauce on low. Add one pound of pasta to a pot of boiling, salted water. Two minutes before it's cooked, remove pasta from water and add to sauce. Cook until tender, allowing pasta to absorb sauce. Add a little pasta water if needed to keep sauce liquid. Drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with Italian cheese, such as Grana Padano. Garnish with basil. Serves six.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 470
CARBS: 66 G
PROTEIN: 13 G
FAT: 16 G

Spaghetti allo Scoglio

"Reef spaghetti" is a classic seafood pasta made with lots of shellfish, which are high in both protein and omega-3s.

Pomodoro sauce
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus 2 teaspoons, divided
6 scallops
8 shrimp, peeled, with heads on
3 fresh sprigs of oregano
3 fresh sprigs of thyme
Salt and pepper to taste
8 mussels
8 clams
1 pound spaghetti or linguine
1/2 cup white wine

Boil a pot of salted water. Heat pomodoro in a saucepan. Add one tablespoon oil to a saute pan and brown scallops (one minute per side). Set aside. Saute shrimp until just pink. Cut off heads. Set shrimp aside. Return heads to the saute pan along with a cup of water, oregano, thyme, salt, and pepper. Simmer 10 minutes to make a broth. Add mussels and a teaspoon oil; cover. Remove when mussels open. Repeat with clams. Add pasta to boiling water. Strain broth in a sieve; return it to the saute pan. Add wine; simmer a few minutes. Return scallops and shrimp to pan with 1/2 cup pomodoro. Two minutes before pasta is cooked, remove from water and add to saute pan, stirring to coat with more pomodoro. Simmer until tender. Fold in clams and mussels. Serves six.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 513
CARBS: 68 G

PROTEIN: 20 G
FAT: 14 G

Rigatoni a la Norma

"The very best eggplant is like filet mignon," says Bastianich. Here it's lightly fried "and incredibly tender and flavorful."

Pomodoro sauce
1 medium eggplant, peeled, then cut into one-inch cubes Salt and pepper to taste
4 tablespoons flour
2 garlic cloves, crushed
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
1 pound rigatoni
6 tablespoons ricotta cheese

Boil a pot of salted water. Heat pomodoro in a saucepan. Sprinkle eggplant with salt. Place on paper towels to drain for 10 minutes, then dust with flour. In a saute pan on medium, saute one garlic clove in 1 1/2 tablespoons oil until golden. Add half the eggplant; saute until brown on the outside but tender inside. Place on paper towels to drain excess oil. Repeat with 1 1/2 tablespoons oil and remaining garlic and eggplant. In the same pan, saute onion in last tablespoon of oil until tender (seven minutes). Add to pomodoro sauce. Season with salt and pepper. Add pasta to boiling water. Two minutes before pasta is cooked, remove from water and add with the eggplant to the pomodoro sauce (with some pasta water if needed to keep the sauce liquid). Cook until pasta is tender. Divide into six servings. Top each with a tablespoon of ricotta.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 559
CARBS: 74 G
PROTEIN: 14 G
FAT: 21 G

Penne Primavera

Primavera means spring, but Bastianich says you can make this dish year-round using whatever vegetables are in season.

Pomodoro sauce
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
1 medium zucchini, cut into
1/2-inch slices, or diced
1 yellow pepper, sliced into
1/4-inch strips
1 cup sliced mushrooms
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup cherry tomatoes
1 cup peas
1 pound whole-wheat penne

Put a large pot of heavily salted water on high heat to boil, and simmer pomodoro in a saucepan on low. Place the onion, zucchini, yellow pepper, and mushrooms on a 9x13 baking sheet. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then drizzle with the oil and toss lightly. Broil at 400° F until almost tender (about 10 minutes, turning vegetables halfway through). Add cherry tomatoes and peas to the pan, and broil for two more minutes. Set vegetables aside. Add pasta to boiling water. Two minutes before pasta is cooked, remove it from water and add to the pomodoro sauce, along with a little pasta water if needed to keep sauce liquid. Stir and simmer over low heat until pasta is tender. Add the vegetables and gently stir. Season with salt and pepper. Serves six.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 489
CARBS: 75 G

PROTEIN: 14 G
FAT: 14 G

Orecchiette with Broccoli Rabe

Make this with or without pomodoro. Use the broccoli rabe florets and stems for a balance of sweet and bitter flavors.

1 tablespoon canola oil, divided
1/2 pound fresh sausage (pork or lamb), sliced into coins
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1/2 pound broccoli rabe, cut in one inch pieces (discard tough ends)
1 tablespoon butter (or omit and use warmed pomodoro sauce)
1/2 teaspoon red chili pepper flakes Salt and pepper to taste
1 pound dried or fresh orecchiette
1 tablespoon olive oil (to drizzle)

Boil a pot of salted water. Heat 1 1/2 teaspoons canola oil in a saute pan over medium. Add sausage and cook, letting pieces brown on one side before turning. Remove and set aside. Heat remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons canola oil in the same pan. Add garlic and saute until golden brown. Add broccoli rabe and four tablespoons water. Cook until tender. Add sausage and butter (omit butter if using pomodoro sauce). Season with dried red chili pepper flakes, salt, and pepper. Add pasta to boiling water. Two minutes before it's cooked, remove it from water and add to saute pan, along with a splash of pasta water. (Alternatively, add pasta to the saute pan along with heated pomodoro sauce.) Cook until pasta is tender. Drizzle with olive oil. Serves six.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 466
CARBS: 58 G
PROTEIN: 17 G
FAT: 19 G

Fettucine Capricciosa

This simple pasta dish uses prosciutto, which is salt-cured, air-dried Italian ham. It has a slightly sweet, earthy flavor that goes well with the sweetness of yellow onion.

Pomodoro sauce
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
Salt
1/2 pound prosciutto or ham, thinly sliced into ribbons
1 pound dried fettucine

Put a large pot of heavily salted water on high heat to boil, and simmer pomodoro in a saucepan on low. Add canola oil to a saute pan on low heat. Add onions to the pan, sprinkle with salt, and saute until golden brown and tender, about 12 minutes. Remove onions and set aside. Saute the prosciutto in the same pan until slightly crispy (about five minutes), then add to the pomodoro sauce along with the onions. Add pasta to the boiling water. Two minutes before it's cooked, remove pasta from the water and add it to the pomodoro with a little pasta water if needed to keep the sauce liquid. Cook until the pasta is tender. Serves six.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 528
CARBS: 67 G
PROTEIN: 22 G
FAT: 17 G

Pasta Puttanesca

This rich-tasting sauce gets its tangy, briny flavor from the combination of olives, capers, and anchovies.

Pomodoro sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil
1/4 cup black or kalamata olives, pitted and sliced
2 tablespoons capers
2 teaspoons fresh chopped thyme
2 teaspoons fresh chopped oregano
1 pound dried strozzapreti or cavatelli
1 2-ounce can of anchovies
1 teaspoon fresh chopped mint

Put a large pot of heavily salted water on high heat to boil, and simmer pomodoro in a saucepan on low. Heat olive oil in a saute pan on medium. Add sliced olives and capers and saute for five minutes, then add to the pomodoro sauce. Toss in thyme and oregano, and simmer on low for 15 minutes. Add pasta to the boiling water. While it cooks, add anchovies to the sauce and simmer. Two minutes before the pasta is cooked, remove from water and add to the sauce, stirring to coat the pasta. Add a little pasta water if necessary to keep the sauce liquid. Add mint. Simmer until the pasta is tender. Serves six.

CALORIES PER SERVING: 407
CARBS: 64 G
PROTEIN: 12 G
FAT: 11 G

Link to article: Perfect Pasta